

Message Text

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42

ACTION NEA-06

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 EUR-10 IO-03 PRS-01 SAM-01

CIAE-00 INR-11 NSAE-00 RSC-01 NSC-07 NSCE-00 EB-03

FAA-00 DOTE-00 H-01 L-02 SY-02 PM-03 SP-01 DODE-00

COME-00 DRC-01 SCCT-01 /069 W

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R 231051Z AUG 74

FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9833

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

AMEMBASSY ROME

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 10094

LIMDIS

DEPT PASS TO FAA/AIA-I

FOR FAA BRUSSELS AEU-I

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: ETRN PINS LE

SUBJ: CIVAIR: SECURITY AT BEIRUT AIRPORT

1. REUTERS ARTICLE CIRCULATED WIDELY IN BEIRUT PRESS
AUG 23 CITES WASH POST REPORT BY JACK ANDERSON TO
EFFECT THAT FAA, IN RECENT SURVEY OF FOREIGN AIRPORTS,
HAS CONCLUDED THAT EIGHT OF THEM--BEIRUT, BRUSSELS,
BANGKOK, BUENOS AIRES, COPENHAGEN, LONDON, NEW DELHI,
AND ROME--COULD SERVE AS "HAVENS FOR TERRORISTS" BECAUSE
OF INADEQUATE SECURITY MEASURES. RE BEIRUT AIRPORT, FAA QUOTED
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AS FOLLOWS: "ARAB TERRORISTS CONTINUE TO USE LEBANON AS HAVEN

FOR MURDERERS, HIJACKERS AND TERRORISTS. THERE IS NO APPRECIATION BY SECURITY PERSONNEL AT THE AIRPORT OF THE DIMENSIONS OF THE SECURITY THREAT POSED BY POTENTIAL TERRORISTS". ARTICLE ADDS THAT CONGRESSMAN JOHN MURPHY HAS REQUESTED TRANSPORTATION SECRETARY BRINEGAR TO SUSPEND ALL US AIR TRAFFIC TO EIGHT FOREIGN AIRPORTS UNTIL SUCH TIME AS THEIR SECURITY ARRANGEMENTS ARE IMPROVED.

2. OCCURS TO US THAT FAA SURVEY CITED ABOVE MAY BE BASED IN PART ON CLASSIFIED INFORMATION FURNISHED BY US IN CONFIDENCE TO FAA SECURITY OFFICIAL JOSEPH DENSON--WHOSE WIFE WE UNDERSTAND WORKS FOR CONGRESSMAN MURPHY--DURING HIS APRIL VISIT TO BEIRUT. IN ANY EVENT, ABOVE QUOTATION TALLIES VERY CLOSELY WITH WHAT WE HAVE BEEN REPORTING FOR SOME TIME (BEIRUT 2404 AND PREVIOUS), ALTHOUGH THERE HAVE NEVERTHELESS BEEN SOME RELATIVELY MINOR IMPROVEMENTS IN SECURITY SITUATION AT AIRPORT IN PAST YEAR OR SO. ALTHOUGH OUR PAST EFFORTS TO GALVANIZE GOL INTO REDUCING BEIRUT AIRPORT'S MOST SERIOUS SECURITY WEAKNESSES HAVE MET WITH ONLY MARGINAL SUCCESS, WE FEAR PUBLICATION OF FAA REPORT WILL CAUSE ANY FURTHER EFFORTS WE MIGHT MAKE IN THIS REGARD TO BE VIEWED BY LOCAL OFFICIALS AS PART OF SOME "PLOT" AIMED AT FORCING GOL INTO RENEWED CONFRONTATION WITH FEDAYEEN, USING QUESTION OF AVIATION SAFETY AS PRETEXT. AT VERY LEAST, IT WILL PROVIDE DOMESTIC OPPONENTS OF FRANGIE REGIME CONVENIENT ISSUE WITH WHICH TO EMBARRASS GOL. ON PURELY TECHNICAL LEVEL, IT WILL ALSO PROVE HIGHLY DAMAGING TO RCAA'S AND FAA REP'S RELATIONS WITH LEBANESE CIVIL AVIATION OFFICIALS. FINALLY, IN ADDITION TO DAMAGING INTERESTS OF US AIRLINES OPERATING IN THIS AREA, SUCH IRRESPONSIBLE LEAKS CAN ALSO HARM POTENTIAL SALES OF U S AIRCRAFT AND AVIATION EQUIPMENT IN LEBANON.

3. WE UNDERSTAND PAN AMERICAN REGIONAL OFFICE, IF QUERIED RE FAA SURVEY, PLANS DENY ANY INVOLVEMENT AND STATE THAT COMPANY CONSIDERS AIRPORT SECURITY CONDITIONS MEET BASIS FAA STANDARDS.
GODLEY

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Message Attributes

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